



Dubuque, IA
Bronze Star recipient

Air Force Senior Airman Nicholas Worthington

The prevalence of munitions and the repeated use of roadside bombs in the Iraq War make Air Force Senior Airman Nicholas Worthington's skills in high demand on the ground. As an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technician with the 377th Civil Engineer Division, Worthington's ability to disarm Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and other munitions made him an invaluable asset during his tour of duty. From March to August 2006, while deployed with the 447th Air Expeditionary Group near Baghdad, Worthington supported the air assault element of the 101st Airborne Division. He took part in 95 EOD emergency response missions and was responsible for neutralizing 70 IEDs, 2,151 ordnance items and 43,042 rounds of ammunition, as well as locating numerous weapons caches and performing multiple post-blast analyses.

Worthington's tasks often placed him in the line of fire. In June 2006, the back vehicle of his convoy hit an IED. As his team assessed the site during a post-blast analysis, they found a wire running from the blast area to a nearby house. While moving toward the house, another IED went off, throwing Worthington to the ground, wounding him and briefly causing him to lose hearing in his left ear.

Worthington immediately shook off the shock and provided aid to his team leader and another soldier who was also hurt, before a medic could arrive at the scene. Small-arms fire then erupted from the nearby house. Worthington shielded his team leader from the enemy with his body and laid down suppressive fire, pinning down the insurgents inside the house and giving the team time to regroup and relocate. After twenty minutes, the fighting subsided, as Worthington and his team eliminated the insurgent threat. Worthington then helped carry the wounded to an evacuation helicopter.

In another mission, Worthington cleared a substantial weapons cache located between two IEDs while under hostile fire. After a sniper hit his team leader, Worthington fired back at the enemy, and was able to neutralize the second IED and make sure the team safely got out of the battlefield.

Worthington also successfully completed a 28-hour rescue operation, as he responded to a shot-down Apache helicopter. Worthington neutralized four IEDs in the area with a Talon robot, while under RPG, mortar and small-arms fire. Worthington's team took no casualties during the operation.

For his courage under fire and saving the lives of several Coalition service members, Worthington was awarded the Bronze Star in September 2006.



SrA Worthington receives his Bronze Star from Col. Terrence Feehan, at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.